

THE INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL CONFLICT IN THE MIDDLE EAST

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ABSTRACT

The Middle East is one of the hottest regions in the world; The Middle East is characterized by the laxity and softness of its borders since there are no fixed physical boundaries. Moreover, the geographical location in which the Middle East is settled is unique that makes it a definition of political geography in the study of the relationship and impact of geographical location on political decision.

The Middle East, according to the rules of the new regional order, is one of the most politically and militarily active areas, and it seems to remain so for the foreseeable future. Politically, while keeping the situation of military conflict influential, pressing and effective to influence any political road map, while the conflicts are everywhere in the region.

The paper analyzes the multiple alliances and conflicts underlying the political and security challenges in the region and examines how these structures have provided opportunities for alternative authorities on the ground as well as internationally.

KEYWORDS: Middle East, Political Conflict & Political Geography

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INTRODUCTION

The Middle East is one of the hottest regions in the world, it is the fatty material on the media in its daily bulletins as well as a field for the study of international theories and a test of political interactions, since the ruling regimes in the middle east are part of the determinants of the national security of the major powers, in addition to the fertile ground for conflicts and wars, where once a battle on its territory ends until another breaks out within its borders, making it the center area of international conflict. Moreover, the ongoing conflict is dominated by the form of civil wars or what has become known as the agency war and sometimes with an enemy coming from behind the Middle East border and leaving after the planting of its agents.

The Middle East is characterized by the laxity and softness of its borders since there are no fixed physical boundaries. Also, it expands and narrows according to the events that take place between the heart of the regions and the sides of regions, and sometimes its borders become based on national feelings and throughout history, this region has been a conflict zone with its neighbors in geography. So, this region is sometimes is rising up or sometimes is invaded.

Controlling the Middle East is a national endeavor for the major powers, because it has a range of characteristics and advantages that make it the object of the ambitions and eyes of world powers, including the holy places, geography, resources, and population density.

The holy places in the Middle East are one of the enough reasons to make it a region of continuous war to control the holy places in it, and its control constitutes a religious tendency rooted in the veins of religions, contrary to the religion of the majority in the region on the one hand, and between the doctrines of one religion who are stable in the region on the other hand, whose policies revolve around the doctrine and mentality of tightening the grip on the sanctities, where some doctrines represent a priority in controlling them according to the theory of the processing of the region, thus formulated narrow doctrinal theories that led to bloodshed and a sharp sectarian alignment that damaged the Social entity within the same country of the Middle East, with followers drawn heavily towards these theories.

The geographical location in which the Middle East is settled is unique that makes it a definition of political geography in the study of the relationship and impact of geographical location on political decision. It is one of the most influential geographies on political decision at the regional and international level; starting with its water limits that reach the largest oceans, together with their outlook on the Mediterranean Sea with a wide and huge interface, represent the vital depth of warm waters in which merchant ships and military fleets move. In addition, the acquisition of sea fronts on the Mediterranean is the ambition of countries isolated from the sea.

The geographical weight of the Middle East is increasing strongly in its transit straits, which are commercial outlets for the world from Dardanelles and Bosphorus to the Suez Canal, the Strait of Hormuz and Babb al-Mandeb. Moreover, the Middle East has a huge oasis of land that has made it linked to the continents of the ancient world as well as a link in the Silk Road that has recently revived.

Resources were and still are the cause of conflicts and wars. They are, of course, rare and do not exist in all the world, which made them on the list of national security of the major countries and considered their protection is their responsibility starting with the stages of extraction to export, so the major countries built their military bases in The Middle East so as to protect the resources in its interior. In the Middle East, hundreds of millions of people settle, making it a market for major countries with various kinds of goods, and sectarian sensitivities have made it the largest market of arms and weapons.

In an assessment of political geography in the Middle East and North Africa until mid-2017, the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) finds that much of the differences between America and its Arab partners, as well as with Israel, stem from the simple fact that their interests are no longer clearly interlinked. That's why Obama administration has determined that U.S. interests require negotiating a nuclear deal with Iran rather than cooperating with Saudi Arabia and other Gulf States, and Israel, in a fierce cold war against the Iranians. But the Trump administration had another decision, promising to join authoritarian states on an extremist front against Tehran, but it is unlikely to lead to a safer and more peaceful Middle East.

Until mid-2017, the Middle East remained in chaos and intense competition among the region's forces led to a strategic landscape based on the ongoing conflict, causing significant casualties as the war continues in Libya, Syria, Yemen and Iraq.

Russia has advanced in the region and the election of Donald Trump in the United States has created a state of uncertainty. The rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran is exacerbated by regional conflicts and policies, and tensions between Saudi Arabia and the UAE on the one hand and Qatar on the other has unprecedented differences between the GCC countries and their allies. There was uncertainty between Turkey and Iran over their respective ambitions in Iraq and

Syria. These dynamics together have failed the joint efforts to resolve the conflict and achieve a breakthrough, putting aside issues of governance and reform.

Just, weeks after Trump's arrival at the White House, it became clear that Washington had not changed its strategy in Syria. Although, U.S. attempts to punish the regime in Iran which has dashed Moscow's hopes of cooperating with Washington in Syria, The White House has not increased its support for Syrian rebels but has instead focused on defeating ISIS and drive the group out of Raqqa.

Turkey has lobbied against U.S. cooperation with Kurdish forces, but its efforts have not succeeded because it has been unable to put forward an alternative realistic strategy or mobilize a force against the regime that can be relied upon. Iran's ambitions to build a land bridge from its borders to Syria and Lebanon through Iraq and expand its presence in southern Syria along the border with Jordan and Israel have increased the likelihood of confrontation between the United States and pro-Iranian militias in Syria.

Washington's new approach to the Middle East emerged with Trump's visit to Saudi Arabia in May 2017. The event was shown in the form and content of the U.S.-Saudi alliance. The President's condemnation of Iran for allegedly fueling sectarian conflict and terrorism has raised concerns that he has embraced Saudi Arabia's doctrinal view of regional politics. In conjunction with the Riyadh summit, Hassan Rouhani's re-election as President of Iran failed to change the hostility of the United States and Arab states to Tehran.

The Middle East, according to the rules of the new regional order, is one of the most politically and militarily active areas, and it seems to remain so for the foreseeable future. Politically, while keeping the situation of military conflict influential, pressing and effective to influence any political road map, while the conflicts in Libya, Iraq and Lebanon take another form of regional and international competition so as to show more broadly the rift in the structure of the regional system, and to link it directly to the dynamics. The war on Syria and its realignment and the creation of new equations have been a major reason for making these conflicts remain for a long time. The Syrian victory on its political and military side has become a reality that cannot be overcome or reduced in any way, in addition to the fact that the U.S. invasion of Iraq was in its parts, instigating the activation of new regional trends with far-reaching impacts, which it has contributed to the emergence of local conflicts, which in turn have been a key pillar for the start of regional rivalries and their association with international interventions, making the scene in the Middle East catastrophic and ushering in an international war, according to The Zionist-American efforts to create many conflicts in the region.

Within this data, Syria was the main point of the Russian-Iranian relationship, and here the Russian-Israeli relationship and its effects on the strategic relationship that unites Russia with Syria and Iran are not measured, but the U.S. action based on internal contradictions that exist in any axis does not restrict the Russian and Iranian efforts to continue to confront U.S. hegemony in the region, which has upset both Washington and Israel, undermining the inability to reduce Iran's military capability, as well as attract Russia and seduce it into many gains, if it turns away from Syria and Iran. It is for that, the reason that makes Washington to mobilize against Iran, is a military build-up but with an economic political appearance, the mutual convergence between Riyadh, Abu Dhabi and Tel Aviv has united their obsession and terror of Iran, and therefore the relationship between these capitals may jump beyond diplomatic relations, and therefore there is a quest from the U.S.A to build up an alliance to hit Iran in the near future. The USA crisis over the fall in many regional files could be translated in a Hollywood way, so the continued U.S. reliance on ISIS and the Kurds in Syria carries

messages to Russia and Iran, as well as to Syria, on the other hand, it contains U.S. assurances to both Israel and Saudi Arabia, which is implicit in the U.S. plan to create a bloody scene in the Middle East.

POLITICAL STRUGGLE FOR INFLUENCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

The Middle East has undergone a radical transformation since the Arab uprisings of 2011. In many cases, the post-uprising Arab states have become weaker or collapsed, and regional borders have become fragile and no longer impervious to devastating and far-reaching conflicts. Agent warfare has become the norm, exacerbating humanitarian crises and reducing accountability mechanisms that can restrict conflict and human rights violations. Regional actors have been strengthening their military capability since the war against the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), which began in 2014, and old geopolitical rivalries and state-to-state confrontations have returned, as evidenced by continuing tensions between Saudi Arabia and Iran within the GCC. Moreover, additional factors of tensions and conflicts have emerged, as having Turkish tensions with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, which in turn have provided a crucial geo-strategic alliance between Turkey and Qatar, since the gulf cooperation crisis erupted in 2017.

These rivalries and tensions could lead to new fires amid an ongoing competition to shape the future of the regional system. Saudi Arabia's increasingly assertive and hostile approach to Iran, along with Iran's aggressiveness and strategic gains across the region, has stepped up the battle for the future of the Middle East and the regional system building on the ruins of the conflict in Iraq and Syria. While Iran has become a dominant but still weak power in Iraq and Syria. Its Arab rivals have stepped up their efforts to contain its rise, particularly in Yemen, but also by strengthening its relationship with the United States and expanding diplomatic channels with Israel. In the midst of this regional contest, Russia has disrupted what was once a regional security structure imposed and formed by the United States. Russia's renewed emergence in the Middle East comes alongside an increasingly assertive China. Its global ambitions have been embodied in challenging the Western-led international order, through Beijing's invasion of cash-strapped Middle Eastern countries, as well as through investment and reconstruction within china's "one belt, one road" vision.

This paper examines the extent to which the Middle East has been and continues to be shaped by the rivalry among the superpowers, drawing on the historical superiority of the United States in what has traditionally been considered a backyard for the United States (or the West) or an overwhelmingly superior U.S. region, to assess the extent to which Russia and China have challenged this superiority. The paper analyzes the multiple alliances and conflicts underlying the political and security challenges in the region and examines how these structures have provided opportunities for alternative authorities on the ground as well as internationally. Western diplomatic sources indicate that the Middle East is in a power struggle between the United States, Arab countries and Iran, and the military battlefields in Syria, Iraq and Yemen appear to be witnessing movements on the battlefields against ISIS terrorism on the one hand, and between the United States and Iran on the other, hides a conflict between these countries, over who will control the Middle East? Or how will influence be shared in it?

At the end of World War II, the United States found itself in an economic superiority position, accounting for 60 per cent of world GDP, and its oil and steel production accounted for 70 and 64 per cent of the world's total, respectively. U.S. military capability at the time exceeded that of other allied powers, as did the Soviet Union. It heralded an international order and economic, technological and military progress in the form of the United States. The United States was not an undisputed force in the Middle East, competing, as it once was, with colonial powers such as the British and the French. However, as was also true of these forces, U.S. influence and interaction with the region underscored the need to

ensure the free flow of natural resources and protect allies, to conserve energy, even to use force when necessary. This included intervention after the military coups of the 1950s in the context of the charismatic anti-Western appearance of Gamal Abdel Nasser, who threatened the influence of dominoes across the region. In 1958, the West-aligned Iraqi monarchy fell, leading to the deployment of U.S. forces in Beirut to support the government of Christian leader Camille Chamoun, while the British sent a military force to support King Hussein in Jordan. Under royal rule, Iraq was the only Arab country to join the Baghdad Pact, which aims to establish the NATO equivalent in the region, to contain Soviet influence amid the fall of western-enabled monarchies and the rise of Arab socialist factions and movements.

Other interventions included Anglo-American support for the 1953 coup in Iran that toppled the democratically elected government of Mohammad Mosaddegh (which secured Iran's oil industry) and brought the pro-U.S. Reza Shah Pahlavi back to power. For much of the 20th century, U.S. interests in the region were secured through the so-called "double column" strategy, enabling Iran and Saudi Arabia to be identified as pillars of regional security and beneficiaries of U.S. military equipment. Namely, a strategy reinforced by the rapid increase in oil revenues that followed the oil boom during the decade. U.S.-led efforts to reconcile Israel with its Arab neighbors after the Arab-Israeli war of October 1973 (Day of Atonement War) provided the basis for what Bruce Riedel referred to as "Pax Americana" (American peace, a term that meant a period of post-World War II because of the tyranny of American influence in it). Focused on Washington's attempts to pull Egypt away from Soviet influence, the first Gulf War and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union heralded the emergence of U.S. military expansion in the region, reinforcing the U.S. presence that began in the 1980s after the 1979 revolution. It is, Iran and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, which saw the deployment of tens of thousands of U.S. troops in the Gulf.

We can therefore, say that the whole range of recent challenges since the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the conflict within states, the asymmetric war and violent extremism in the Middle East, have largely overcome the threat of conflict between nations and the potential for ideological warfare and superiority between the United States and Russia. The instability posed by these threats has indirect effects on the United States and its allies in Europe. For example, the complex civil war and the rise of ISIS in Syria have led to intensive and big waves of refugees to Europe, exacerbating domestic economic, political and security issues facing European countries. These threats have maintained the deployment of U.S. military forces in the region, even if there is considerable concern about U.S. intervention, as a result of local popular aversion to major military engagement in the Middle East after the 2003 Iraq war. Even under former U.S. President Barack Obama, who hated the conflict, the United States carried out more drone strikes in the president's first year than former President George W. Bush's 563 strikes during his entire presidency. The United States now has nearly 50,000 troops in the Middle East, including troops in key Gulf States, Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Turkey and Egypt, as well as a large infrastructure of advanced and technologically superior fighter aircraft, surveillance aircraft and drones (Plane without a Pilot).

The future of the Arab state in the Middle East since the Arab uprisings of 2011, the Syrian civil war and the emergence of ISIS have taken an uncertain turn. This crisis has disrupted and tested the System of the Arab State, as has never been seen before in its recent history. The relationship between the citizen and the state declined as institutions retreated or collapsed in the period prior to political unrest, conflict and the collapse of the conflict, leading to the emergence of powerful actors of neighboring states that benefited from social and economic injustices, the collapse of security and the collapse of systems, Political and institutional.

The deterioration of the Arab state has shifted power away from those who have traditionally exercised it, the political and military elites that have historically suppressed the state's challenges of dissidents and rebel groups, using all kinds of persecution and coercion. Thus, armed non-state actors emerged, enabled and sometimes empowered by the same actors in the state, and this phenomenon was an important factor for the authorities and has since exacerbated and exploited ethnic and sectarian divisions to create long-term, bloody and transnational conflicts, which in turn, has destroyed the fabric of communities throughout the region.

In 2014, ISIS declared the end of the national state system created a century before the end of the Ottoman Empire by the colonial powers, France and Britain. ISIS has been in place for more than three years, despite continued efforts by world powers and their allies to contain and defeat them, and has made the sacred border between Iraq and Syria meaningless, one that has never wavered in the past.

In parallel with the founding and expansion of ISIS, the militias of the popular mobilization were established in Iraq. Its 100,000 fighters filled the void left by the collapse of the U.S.-trained Iraqi army after ISIS captured Mosul in June 2014. Non-state armed actors in Iraq and Syria, as well as in other countries such as Libya and Yemen, have replaced the state in providing services and security, in partnership with other actors such as tribes, civil society and clerics. It was these irregular militias in each of these countries that launched the attack, whether in the war against ISIS or the conflict within those countries between different factions, sometimes on the basis of race or sect. This includes the popular mobilization units that fought on the front lines in the fight against ISIS in Iraq, or tens of thousands of Iranian-mobilized militiamen who fought alongside the Assad regime in the face of tens of thousands of insurgent fighters who sought the fall of the Assad regime, with external support from Gulf Cooperation Council and Turkey.

These active actors have traditionally been defined as non-state or hostile (opposed) to the state, yet they have become the state. Local actors (states) were critical to ensuring the survival of national identities and the resilience of their state's borders. They have gone from grass-roots representatives with support and legitimacy at the local level, to representatives who can decisively shape politics and power at the national level.

It remains unclear what form of state will emerge in the countries torn apart by the conflicts in the Arab world. Local actors and armed groups will struggle over power and resources and share power after conflict. Armed groups that will end up integrating the state are aimed at re-establishing the state according to its global ideologies and looks. Since there are no longer clear gaps between governmental and non-governmental actors and because the State will remain weak, armed gatherings that do not join state institutions will continue to threaten the state's resources, identity and sovereignty.

The competition for the state is essentially revealed in the radical transformation of military theaters. External security militias have been used as agents, and are usually not legally accountable, which, if found, is restricted by the laws and customs of the international system.

Since the region's multiple civil wars first began, transnational networks have expanded competition between states and the availability of armed groups capable of seeking sponsors willing to provide all forms of support. Syria's civil war for Iran and its allies may be a moment of victory, a moment of loss for the Arab world and the West, but that does not mean the end of the conflict. Regional actors, which have strengthened their military capability since the war on ISIS nearly five years ago, are returning to old geopolitical rivalries, and inter-state confrontations could lead to a new fire.

Recent conflict policies, intra-state wars and the collapse or weakening of state institutions, as well as the weakening or destruction of the regional system, opportunity structures have enabled alternative forces to either compete or replace the United States as a prominent force in the region. The war has been reversed since Russia intervened in 2015 (with Iran's help) in Syria in favor of President Bashar al-Assad's regime, and Moscow has asserted itself as a credible alternative to the United States through arms sales, economic ties and diplomatic maneuvers. For example, Saudi King Salman traveled to Moscow in October 2017, the first visit by a Saudi king to Moscow, which resulted in more than 15 multi-billion dollar cooperation agreements. Similarly, with increased Russian influence in Syria and U.S. commitment to continue on the path in the countries northeast, Israel has sought Russia's support to reduce Iranian influence in the country.

Russia has tried to maintain and possibly expand its reach in the region since the 1970s, especially after the United States was able to remove Egypt from Soviet influence and place it in the Western camp. But, in the past 15 years alone, Russia's economic recovery has reinvigorated and reinvigorated foreign policy in a region formerly considered a backyard for the United States, exploiting geo-political and economic openness. Russia intervened after the Obama administration suspended some arms sales to Egypt in 2014 due to human rights violations, selling fighter jets and attack helicopters. Similarly, in Iraqi Kurdistan, a region long with the United States, Russia has benefited from the space created by U.S. disengagement with Iraq, as well as the revision of U.S.-KRG. Relations, particularly since the United States refused to support the regional government. Kurdistan, which encouraged the Independence Referendum in September 2017 failed to oppose Baghdad's deployment of its military forces against Kurdish Peshmerga forces. Just, days before the Kurdish independence referendum, Russian energy giant company Rosneft, acquired Kurdish oil pipelines to Turkey for \$1.8 billion, despite Baghdad's objections. The agreement effectively strengthened Russia's political influence in Iraq, if not in the region as a whole. Libya could therefore enable Russia's negotiating hand against the West, at least because confrontation and instability in Libya could allow Russia to use mass migration from Libya as an argument against Europe.

In other words, in less than a decade, the Middle East has moved from a region where the United States has been heavily dominated, to a situation where Russia is in a position to compete with the United States. In addition to recognizing its status, since the outbreak of the conflict in Syria, Russia has seen its geo-strategic gains matched by soft power solutions. For example, the government-speaking station, Russia Today has an Arab service that is one of the three largest networks in the Middle East, along with Al Arabia and Al Jazeera.

The United States may enjoy economic, technological, and military superiority, but Russia has designed its credentials as a critical factor that stands with its allies and advances in achieving it. In the case of Syria, Russia ensured Assad's survival, while in Iraq, it ignored Baghdad's objections to the pipeline agreement with the KRG. Russia has a military strategy for the region, but it focuses mainly on the Mediterranean, according to observers, who also consider Moscow's ties to the Middle East temporary, opportunistic and pushy.

Syria's strategic geo-graphical location provides access to the region and access to the Mediterranean - it is Moscow's most important foothold in the Arab world and its closest ally, and Moscow's alliance with Damascus dates back to the Soviet era when President Hafez al-Assad signed a series of bilateral treaties with Moscow after taking power through a military coup in 1970. The Russian navy facility in Tartus is considered a naval foothold in the Mediterranean and was expanded in 2017 following an agreement with the Syrian regime, which also granted Russian warships access to Syrian waters.

China shares the Middle East with a limited historical presence and does not have the colonial heritage like the West. During the 1970s, Beijing supported Yasser Arafat and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which embraced Maoist revolutionary ideology and received military support from Beijing. This relationship saw the PLO establish an embassy in Beijing in 1974 and China's self-proclaimed independent state of Palestine in 1988. In recent years, Beijing has supported proposals condemning the Israeli occupation in 2012, Palestine's attempt to become a non-MEMBER monitoring state, and pressurize Israel to unconditionally implement UN resolutions, calling for Israeli withdrawal from the Palestinian territories.

However, Beijing has also strengthened its relations with Israel, causing some concern in the United States. China's investments in Israel after the exchange of diplomatic missions in 1992 grew significantly, from \$50 million in the 1990s to \$16.5 billion in 2016. China-Israel economic relations revolve around technological innovation and the Red-Med Railway, a regional network of maritime and rail infrastructure aimed at connecting China to Europe through Asia and the Middle East. The railway will also link the Israeli ports of Eilat and Ashdod. The Shanghai International Port Group (44 percent owned by the Chinese government) won a 2015 government tender to operate a new port in Haifa for 25 years, despite U.S. objections and concerns about its security implications.

It is not only the economy and trade that have strengthened the relationship between the Middle East and China. Public opinion polls indicate that the United States' position in the region has declined since Iraq's 2003 invasion of Iraq, including in U.S.-granted countries such as Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Morocco. 78% of those polled on U.S. policy in a 2006 Arab public opinion poll said that it was either somewhat inappropriate or totally inappropriate. On the contrary, the poll itself shows positive sentiments towards China, which is second only to France as a country to be accepted as the world's superpower. Similarly, 40 percent of respondents in the 2008 poll approved China's performance as a global leader, compared with 17 percent who approved the United States.

China's economic success and emergence as an alternative to the United States in the region are increasingly demonstrated in Arab intellectual discourse, to the point where it has been embraced in some quarters as an alternative to the American model because its "historical and social traditions closely resemble the Middle East."

Growing educational and cultural ties: For example, there are 1,500 Egyptian university students who study Chinese each year, while Al Azhar hosts 200 students of Chinese origin. Chinese companies in Saudi Arabia offer scholarships to Saudi citizens to study in China.

At a time, when the United States has proactively intervened in the region, militarily and politically, to support friendly governments, selectively promote democratic and pro-market reforms, and counter threats to U.S. interests, Beijing has sought to secure friendly relations that are "free of interests." all over the world. China has found opportunities to assert its presence in an area that has never been a traditional force. China's Asian economic growth has seen its sales of projects held along the New Silk Road nearly doubled from \$30 billion to \$57 billion between 2008 and 2014, raising concerns about "offensive trade" and the vision of the "global belt."

This growth has led to increased China's participation in the region, which provides an important source of energy. China is currently among the top three importers from Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Iran. The urgent need for energy that confirms China's commitment to the region is to change its relations in strategic alliance level, rather than transactional relationship level. After King Salman's state visit to Beijing in March 2017, several bilateral agreements were signed in the

oil, space and renewable energy sectors with a total value of \$65 billion. China is also competing with the United States and Russia in Egypt, where it has established a new cooperation zone in the Suez Canal. In Oman, Chinese capital flows have transformed a fishing village into a \$10.7 billion "China-Oman Industrial City" with an oil refinery capable of processing 235,000 barrels per day.

Iran is the region's number one trade partner, with trade exchanges exceeding \$37 billion in 2017 and deepening since the United States unilaterally stopped implementing the joint cooperation plan, the 2015 Iran Nuclear Agreement, and the reinstatement of imposed sanctions on Tehran. For example, CITIC Group, the investment arm owned by China, established a \$10 billion credit line for Iran after the U.S. withdrawal from the agreement, despite the threat of new sanctions, putting all foreign companies under increased pressure to reduce its presence in the country. However, this could lead to complications, if relations between Iran and Israel deteriorate and lead to direct military confrontation. In fact, the growing relationship between Beijing and Tehran has prompted Israel to seek China's support for its attempts to reduce Iran's nuclear ambitions, as well as Zionist support for Israeli efforts to suppress Iran's regional agents such as Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Militarily, China and Iran conducted joint naval exercises on the border of the Strait of Hormuz. In the past, Beijing has sent naval forces to protect trade and evacuate citizens caught up in a regional conflict, most notably in Libya in 2011 and Yemen in 2015 when China evacuated 225 foreign nationals and about 600 Chinese citizens from Yemen's southern port of Aden, the first time the Chinese army carried out the evacuation of Chinese nationals in the conflict zone. Continued investment in port infrastructure (Strait of Hormuz, Bab al-Mandab Strait, Suez Canal, Haifa), and thus strategic checkpoints, could see China ultimately seeking military access in the region, as happened in Djibouti, where China established a military base.

The Middle East continues to be a strategically important scene in an increasingly interdependent world order. It contains more than half of the world's oil reserves, as well as natural gas and minerals. While the United States has become independent on the subject of energy, it still has a vested interest in protecting energy flows in a region that is vital not only to the global economy but also to its allies. Any disruption of the regional economy or attempts by U.S. adversaries to control the regional energy could have serious consequences for Washington's allies.

Russia and China have both achieved great success in what has traditionally been portrayed as an American (or Western) backyard. However, the United States still maintains an expanded military infrastructure of energy, which gives it such a large presence and technical superiority that its opponents cannot compete in those areas. Russia and China have strengthened their credentials amid U.S. disengagement from the region and popular discontent with Western expenditures that have failed to make profits. But Russia and China have yet to prove to be reliable alternatives, despite their growing assertion. This may be because of the region's continued and expanded U.S. military infrastructure, as well as the predominance of Western soft power expectations, but it may only be a matter of time. On the other hand, the region has had limited social and cultural interactions with Russia and China, but the current trajectory suggests that this may change in the coming years, assuming that Moscow and Beijing remain committed to continued geo-strategic investment.

REGIONAL RIVALRY AMONG MAJOR COUNTRIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST

The region's geopolitics was primarily characterized by competition between Iran on the one hand, and Saudi Arabia and its GCC partners on the other. The two countries on the Arabian Gulf were competing for influence in large arenas

including Iraq, Bahrain, Yemen, Syria and Lebanon. Nearly, as long as the fault lines are, Iran has allied itself with Shiite groups, while Saudi Arabia has embraced other Sunni powers. The competition between the two has become the hallmark of conflict and security in the Middle East.

The reality of the concept of U.S. withdrawal from the Middle East is overestimated, but U.S. influence in the region is certainly in a decline. The United States maintains an important presence of its forces in the region, but the U.S. public is showing limited support for military participation in ongoing conflicts in the Middle East. The belief that the United States no longer depends on oil supplies in the region is not certain from the realities of the global oil market, but it is nevertheless a belief that is part of contemporary U.S. decision-making. The United States has retreated from the diplomatic leadership of the Middle East peace process and conflict management throughout the region. With the exception of Iran-related issues, on which the United States is consistently but not consistently focused, Washington no longer has much interest in the region.

Other actors have imposed themselves on regional decision-making. As these two dynamics converge, a new geopolitical structure is developing in the region. Six key countries -- Saudi Arabia, Iran, Turkey, Israel, the United States, and Russia-- retain some of their influence in the past, although their level of influence has declined significantly. China does not currently play a central role in regional affairs management, but is building its economic and diplomatic ties throughout the region, and is expected to be more influential in the future.

The main actors have distinct strategic objectives, for example, Iran and Saudi Arabia seek to balance them, while Israel seeks to counter Iran's nuclear and regional ambitions, and is involved in managing the conflict rather than resolving the conflict in dealing with the Palestinians. Saudi Arabia shares the strategic goal of countering Iran, but Saudi Arabia and Arab public opinion are setting limits on the depth of Saudi-Israeli cooperation.

Turkey, on the other hand, has a dual strategy for Islamists and is increasingly involved in regional affairs, while Russia seeks to protect state sovereignty and gain influence at the expense of the United States.

The split in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) has strengthened ties between Turkey and Qatar, two forces that are biased or sympathetic to the Muslim Brotherhood, against Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, which oppose the Muslim Brotherhood. The defection has pushed Qatar into closer ties with Iran, possibly temporarily. U.S. diplomatic efforts to calm the dispute have not succeeded, and U.S. President Donald Trump's interest in forming a new Middle East security alliance has been delayed as a result of this and other developments.

U.S. strategy in the region is confused at its best. U.S. diplomatic involvement in pushing for a regional and military framework that would support stability and limit Iran's reach may still yield results, but require the United States to convince its presumed partners in the region, that, it has a willingness and authority to remain.

The rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran is almost turning into a conflict. Both are oil-rich countries with a large geographical size, but Iran outperforms the kingdom in terms of the natural characteristics of power. Unfortunately for Iran, the United States and Israel are intervening to add significant strategic weight to the kingdom's power. The region declined at the end of the Mubarak era in 25 May 2011 revolution, even its presence was strong in influencing the scene, in addition to the economic crisis and the state of internal political blockage. Despite Egypt's attempt to arrange the inner house and overcome the effects of the chaos that accompanied the revolution and the military coup, Cairo is trying to play an important role under the map of new alliances. Turkey, with its 80 million citizens, has evolved from a U.S. orbiting

country into an independent and important regional power that continues to grow. The Kemalist doctrine (according to Mustafa Kemal Pasha, the founder of the modern Turkish state) was gradually abandoned over the years and a new Ottoman doctrine was developed.

Turkey went from a favorable ally of the West to an independent regional power; However, Turkey remained a U.S. ally after the Second World War and after its participation and engagement of The NATO in 1952 for the very simple reason, that, it was the only force that could protect it from its traditional enemy, Russia. With regional conflicts in the Caucasus and the Balkans erupting on or near the Turkish border, this signaled the possibility of abandoning the isolationist principles of perfectionism, which brought new opportunities for regional influence and leadership, Turkey made its first attempt to expand in 1994 when it made a military action against north Cyprus and occupied third percent of the island. The man supported by the Islamic Welfare Party, the mayor of Istanbul, became the mayor of Istanbul and was later briefly imprisoned Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the current president. The Turkish role was considered by Ahmet Davutoglu, a professor of political science in Istanbul, who later became chief foreign policy adviser under Recep Tayyip Erdogan and developed a new foreign policy outlook of The Justice and Development Party that would make Turkey Play a bigger role in the Middle East and the world.

This is the intellectual foundation that shaped the doctrine of the new Turkish power, and the concept of Turkey's supreme status, much more than just a regional power in the Middle East, and the concentration of internal development in Anatolia, away from Istanbul and the coast of Asia Minor, and the interventionist policy in Iraq and Syria has become divided between Turkey and the United States. After 2001, the Turkish economy began with significant investments in infrastructure in Anatolia, which developed much of the agricultural industrial economy in this previously neglected region. Between 2002 and 2011, the Turkish economy grew at a rate of 7.5 percent per annum, while average per capita income rose from US\$2,800 in 2001 to about US\$10,000 in 2011 and is still rising up to present The f-35's co-production with Lockheed Martin, the design of a major Turkish battle tank and plans to build an aircraft carrier and submarines at the Turkish shipyard are examples.

Turkish military bases are also internationally located in Azerbaijan, Northern Cyprus, Iraq, Qatar, Somalia, Syria, Kuwait and other places, and attest not only to Turkey's great regional ambitions, but also to its ability to pursue its policies and maintain its influence. The development of this military force, with the possibility of effective intervention, will necessarily end with its use, and turkey's growth is not expected to stop to a major regional power. When they have a real interest, it is natural that their expanding power will be diverted to the West, and the problems of its economy will not stop its geopolitical expansion, and experts say that the Turkish economic collapse, if it happens will hurt Europe more than, it will harm Turkey.

Iran is also trying to expand in the region, it is strongly influential in historical Arab capitals, Baghdad, Damascus, Sana'a and Beirut, and exerts considerable influence in them, but it's increased influence is confronted with internal and economic factors hindering expansion, in addition to U.S. sanctions, which experience has proven do not limit regional ambitions. After the 1979 Islamic Revolution, the Iranian regime sought to export the revolution and the ideology, it carried abroad. Tehran supported Hezbollah in Lebanon to serve as its regional arm, but the long bloody war with Iraq in the 1980s greatly limited these expansionist ambitions. The U.S. invasion of Iraq and the collapse of the Baathist regime provided Tehran with a new space to play through the gate of Shiite political currents participating in the rule of Iraq. The

Arab spring was an opportunity for Tehran, since the Arab countries are busy with their local problems and the arrival of protesting to Bahrain by the hand of Tehran's friends in it.

Iran is driven by a desire to ensure the regime's longevity, which is not surprising. Since the 1979 revolution, Iranians have felt isolated in its region and in the world. They see themselves as a beleaguered revolutionary state, a government that the United States and other world powers want to eradicate, if possible. Therefore, they seek to expand their influence wherever possible. There's an ideological dimension to it. In both the Iranian constitution and the leadership mentality, protesting the export of the revolution has always been a priority. For the Iranians, the Islamic Revolution was not intended to be a revolution in one country, but was intended to be conceived as something that radiates throughout the Muslim world and beyond, because of the anti-imperialist worldview of revolutionary leadership.

So, they sought from the early days to engage, particularly in conflict zones, with agents and allies, in an effort to provide funding to those groups seen as expanding Iran's influence or serving Iran's interests in certain fields. The first and most important player in Iran's arsenal is Hezbollah, which Iran helped structure itself and provide funding, and is now a semi-independent affiliate in the sense that it is a full partner of the IRGC, in many different battlefields, most of which are clearly in Syria.

The Iranians sought to engage directly with Israel for strategic and ideological purposes. They see the Israelis as the only player they can compete with on the regional stage. They also believe that their efforts to try to participate in this conflict will help them throughout the Arab world. The Islamic Republic was not absolutely popular outside its borders, but its protest on the Palestinian cause is one way to play on the Arab street, and to declare the hypocrisy of Arab governments that were usually strong in their support of the Palestinians, but were less so in terms of the actual progress of the cause of independence and sovereignty.

Perhaps, the most important feature of regional competition in gaining positions and strengthening influence in the Middle East and the post-revolutionary Muslim world is the presence of emerging regional parties and powers such as Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Iran, while security and ideological considerations dominate the Iranian orientation. Turkey, Saudi Arabia, the Gulf, Arab and Islamic states are trying to resist Iran's influence in the region, as we see it in Yemen.

Turkey and Iran appear to have exploited the strategic weakness case in regional power balances to begin weaving new tools to revive and strengthen their regional roles, reflecting in the shadow of the Syrian military crisis.

The eastward orientation towards our Arab region is also the most common feature of these two forces, which dream of restoring the glories of ancient empires based on historical and ideological considerations.

The Turkish and Iranian movements after the great Arab Revolution have witnessed large-scale movements in several circles and on more than one front in terms of penetrating and dominating the region, as part of its perception of its regional and even trans-territorial role.

These moves have been linked to direct interventions in the internal affairs of some countries in the region, beyond what is usually understood in the service of national interests or strategic objectives, which has sparked widespread debate about the dimensions of Turkey's and Iran's regional external role. In particular, during the current Syrian crisis, it seemed that the regional race between Turkey, Iran and Saudi Arabia was making its way decisively at the heart of the region and its issues, as evidenced by the intensity of movements, initiatives and even security and military alliances, as well as diplomatic methodology, with indicating the existence of strategic agendas for some of the patterns of these moves.

The Saudis, for their part, are aware of their economic power, political influence and religious status in the region as a whole, and even in the entire Muslim world, and Saudi Arabia has long tried to invest its strong ties with the United States in strengthening its regional role in the region to be a difficult number. In the regional political equation, it attaches particular attention to the dominance of the region in the confrontation with Iran's growing influence in the region. Moreover, the Saudi regional orientation comes in the context of the shift in the objectives of Saudi foreign policy, which has moved from just facing the local emergency conditions, and meeting the needs in the light of the data of the status quo, to attempting to penetrate the regional and international climate surrounding, and prepare it with achieving as much of its strategic objectives as possible.

Not surprisingly, this trend has been prominent in Saudi foreign policy concerns, especially after King Salman bin Aziz and his ruling team came to power in Riyadh in January 2015, and the kingdom's role as a key player in trying to turn Iran's failures into gains has emerged. An important policy in the Middle East and the Muslim world as a result of Tehran's failure to comply with its moral obligations towards blatant foreign interventions, especially with the emergence of new regional factors in the context of the cold war, which has become a reality at the regional level, among the actors in the region (Iran - Saudi Arabia).

The current confrontation has played a key role in Syria's power struggle, which has implicated all regional eyes, as well as the current confrontation between Riyadh and Tehran in Yemen that took the form of a proxy war. A very important element in this cold war in the Middle East is the influence of the balance of power between regional actors, but we cannot understand the nature of this war without understanding the interconnections with local conflicts on the one hand, and the national boundaries of the target role on the other. These three regional powers have gone beyond the boundaries of bilateral confrontation in seeking regional alliances in the context of conflict and crisis, and they can no longer ignore the ideological "sectarian" tone in the course of this crisis, taking into account Iran's efforts to fuel the sectarian equation at the heart of conflict in the region.

At the height of this regional conflict, Saudi Arabia launched a Gulf and Arab military alliance to defend the legitimacy in Yemen, and to strike the Houthi military rebellion, in a clear reference to Iran, that the kingdom has become more daring and more attentive in its foreign political and military movements, which has confused the calculations Iran on the strategic level, and even re-evaluated its role in supporting its allies in the region, creating a new equation in the midst of the conflict in Syria, in terms of compensating for the loss in Yemen. It has even opened the door to geo-political changes that are quite different from what was expected for the international powers affecting the region, particularly the United States and Russia, in terms of deepening the strategic vulnerability in the Middle East, with the aim of maintaining their alliances and safeguarding their interests. This has cast a shadow over the emergence of a state-of-the-nation forces that have entered into regional calculations, become an important player in the equation of conflict, and have become a parallel weight to regional actors, competing in regional geopolitical.

The region has lost its balance as a regional system with sovereignty over geo-politics, following the regional stampede and international positioning, which has established new strategic transformations, in which the region has been created in a state of regional alignment, which serves the policy of hegemony among the big players. No one could have understood the impact of the Russian push in Syria without having a stark bang in the strategic framework of the Middle East balance. This rush that turned the tables in front of international and regional players about the Russians' seriousness

in repositioning their foreign policy and military strategy in the outside world, in clear defiance of global policy as a whole, about the Russian role and beyond, even at the expense of regional powers.

Here comes the test for regional actors, and Turkey in particular, whose relations and friendship with Moscow has been placed in the "critical circle" in the context of this rush. This sensitivity has been exacerbated by the disparity in calculations of the war on terror, on which these forces are suspending their military interventions. Officials in Washington understand that Russian military involvement in Middle East conflicts would establish a real confrontation with the Muslim world, the spark of which could be passed on to Russia itself, if we take into account the tensions between the central Russian government and separatists in the Russian provinces. Islamic, especially if Saudi Arabia and Turkey try to play the Islamic card in the battle against Moscow, in this case, the real competition for regional influence in the Middle East is necessarily limited to Turkey and Saudi Arabia, in terms of countering Russian influence in Syria and balancing it in the war on terror. This is what Saudi Arabia wants and sought in establishing the Islamic military alliance. It did not come within the framework of the fact that it represents an entry point to the fight against international terrorism represented by ISIS and the trans-regional organizations - the so-called governmental organizations - just that it does not stop there. The limit is linked to Russia's serious efforts to strengthen the principle of reshaping the strategic balance in the Middle East, to which Moscow aspires to change the rules of the game in Syria, in favor of its allies in the region, Iran. The Saudis therefore have a strong desire, with the direct support of the United States of America, to formulate military arrangements parallel to those Russian moves, and Saudi Arabia is interested in preventing Turkey from formulating the rules of the game in confrontation with Moscow at the heart of the Syrian crisis, if it seeks Ankara to form an alliance that encounters the Russian influence.

The logical conclusion in this regard is that Saudi Arabia wanted a precautionary military alliance to deliver two messages, one international to Moscow, to prevent the acceptance of the policy of imposing Russian facts in Syria, and the second is regional to Turkey that Riyadh is best able to impose its political status and influence in the course of the alignments, not only at the Arab or Middle Eastern level, but also at the Islamic level.

Today, the integrated crisis in Syria, Iraq and Yemen has become the main battleground in the Middle East, and the regional influence of the three countries in many countries of the region seems to be highly guaranteed, noting that the end of the current crisis would determine the fixed view in the Middle East between Knights bet on regional influence and domination.

CONCLUSIONS

The roots of the international competition for the Middle East go back to the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916, under which the Middle East was divided between France and Britain, which was a clear example of competition for the region, and before the discovery of energy sources, the region was important in that, it has become the center of global transportation between the three continents (Asia-Africa-Europe), the intensity of international competition for the Middle East can be seen, specifically at the beginning of the ideological conflict (Cold War). US Secretary of State Foster Dallas, who was under President Eisenhower, stressed the importance of the region by saying: If this citadel falls, the Middle East is in the hands of the Russians, resulting in the Russians controlling all the transportation routes between the West, the East, Asia and Africa. The region, the activity of a number of forces (United States - European Union - Russia - China - Japan) especially in light of the changes witnessed in the Middle East recently, linked either to the variables of the Arab Spring revolutions, or to the developments of some major issues at the Arab and regional level (the Palestinian issue - The Iraqi

Crisis - The Iranian Nuclear File - The Situation in Syria) Taking into account the specificity, importance and impact of the competition of some influential regional powers (Turkey, Iran and Israel) to find a role in these developments, consistent with their interests.

The most important forces competing for primary resources in the Middle East are the developed industrialized countries such as the United States of America and European countries besides Japan, as well as the emerging forces that have emerged from self-sufficiency to the urgent need to keep up with their progress in various sectors in Industrial and service economies such as China, India and Brazil.

First: USA

In measuring the interest, competition and conflict of major powers in the region, the energy issue comes first; it is the first U.S. interest, as it contains the largest part of the world's oil and gas reserves. In 1970, the United States of America went from a producer to an oil-consuming country that could not meet its needs. Then came the issue of nationalization of oil and the rise of oil prices to 4 times globally in 1973, to make the competition not only the aim of America to control the Middle East to draw plans to dismantle this decision, which came in response to the Palestinian cause. The United States has therefore sought to ensure that the flow of these resources is controlled by its stewardship to global markets, and wants to ensure that no other regional or global power will be able to control it. In pursuit of this end, the United States will maintain its military presence in the Persian Gulf, as well as its military alliances with many Gulf Arab states, indefinitely. It is known that one of the economic dimensions of the occupation of Iraq and the military presence in the Middle East is to control the oil resources and maintain these supplies because they perpetuate hegemony, even though they are producer of oil, and this is why the major countries to compete with the United States in the region and seek to undermining its influence even by oil and gas producing countries such as Russia, and the current Syrian issue is of dimensions that go beyond Syria but constitute an obsession and influence on the region as a whole, and at the same time goes beyond competing to a political conflict to achieve the higher interests to which each country aspires.

Second: The European Union

The European Union has historical roots in the Middle East that are related to their interests, and perhaps their effects and plans are still going according to that existing vision of fragmentation and division, and if the leadership is in the hands of the United States of America, the American-European competition in this region is not the result of the moment, but it returns after Europe's rejection of many of America's policies in the region, particularly with regard to the issue of the war on terror, blacklists and sanctions against Iran, differs in terms of vision and orientation. This political competition comes to win positions and attract support to achieve different returns in many forms.

Third: Russian Federation

Historically, the former Soviet Union (Russian Federation) was America's main rival in the Middle East, which succeeded in confronting U.S. power in the region at the peak of the Cold War. Today, however, Russia's capabilities and ambitions are more limited. The power of the Russian Federation almost dissipated from the Middle East during the 1990s. Vladimir Putin returned Russia to the Middle East at the beginning of the 21st century by cooperating with most of the major countries in the region, renewing military support for Syria, Russia's longtime ally, but also building a vast network of relations with Iran, Turkey, Israel, Qatar and Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

Russia is now seeking to rebuild its influence in the Middle East through its military industry, its global political and diplomatic weight, and its weight in the global oil and gas markets. Yet, it has neither ambition nor sufficient capacity to challenge the U.S. presence there, focusing instead on consolidating its dominance over the Caucasus and Central Asia. Russia shares the United States' fear of Islamic extremism and fears instability in the Middle East, which could exacerbate Islamic radicalism and facilitate its expansion between Russia's southern neighbors and Russian Muslims. Unless, Russian power grows steadily, which is unlikely given the country's stagnant political and economic realities, Moscow's ambitions will remain limited.

Fourth: China

China's new approach in the region is the result of a change in China's position from an oil exporter to an importing country, which became the second importer of oil after the United States, since its oil needs are rising by 5 percent every year. China is therefore, keen to play a role in the development of the region's economies and linking it to the Chinese economy. China is also looking forward to playing the role of a competitor to the United States of America in the foreseeable future, seeking to secure its oil revenues to keep pace with the economic movement, which is reflected in an unprecedented economic growth rate exceeding (9%) Annually, China has absorbed the lesson of the occupation of Iraq, seeing in this war an attempt by the United States of America to capture the world's oil resources, especially in the Middle East, which led China to adopt a reaction embodied in its successive penetration of the traditional circles of influence of The United States of America in both Latin America and the Arabian Gulf by concluding oil deals with Venezuela, Iran and Saudi Arabia.

It should be noted that the wars that have broken out since the so-called Arab Spring have created a new ground in which U.S. and Iranian allies are competing for regional hegemony.

Recent history often confirms that the dynamics of political developments in the Middle East are shaped in part by the intervention of outside forces. For most part of the 20th century, this rivalry was clear between the great powers, France and Britain, and then between the Soviet Union and the United States. With the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the communist bloc, America gained hegemony over the Middle East as an external power. More recently, Russia, Turkey, America and Israel have been involved in shaping and consolidating regional conflicts in pursuit of their own goals; A report was released on 4th February 2019 by the Middle East Institute in Washington, entitled "Global and Regional Geopolitical of the Civil War in the Middle East", prepared by Ross Harrison of Georgetown University aims to provide an analysis of the emergence of international competition in the contemporary Middle East, by highlighting the relationship between the Cold War era, the recent regional conflict and the resulting civil wars.

Harrison asserts that the rivalry between America and the Soviet Union that dominated the Middle East during the Cold War has created a division among Arab states, which remains somewhat unresolved to this day. Some countries, such as South Yemen (People's Democratic Republic of Yemen), and the Republican regimes in Egypt, Iraq, Syria and Libya, have enjoyed close ties with the Soviet Union. While Arab countries such as Saudi Arabia and the rest of the Gulf enjoyed post-colonial, North Yemen (Yemeni Arab Republic), Jordan, Morocco, etc., are supported by the United States of America. The entry of many Middle Eastern countries into civil wars during the Cold War, such as those, from the Lebanese conflicts of the 1950s and 1970s to the civil wars in Yemen, served as the theatres through which the Soviet Union and America were able to compete for Geopolitics control on the Middle East. In this regard, Julian O'Brien of

The Harvard International Review says, "The United States and the Soviet Union have shown the world that the Cold War can easily be the most burdened by regional states".

In other words, civil wars in the Middle East have become one of the tools exploited by the great powers for geopolitical expansion. This template of regional rivalry and the divisions it left among the Arab states continued even after the end of the Cold War period, as the collapse of the Soviet Union and the rise of the star of unipolar American hegemony led to economic and political turmoil in the countries that were previously allied with the communist bloc, these countries lost the support they were providing with military assistance, favorable trade conditions and security guarantees, while finding themselves in confrontation with America and its local allies, including influential countries such as Turkey, and Israel.

Harrison explains that the Cold War not only created an imbalance, but also led to a shift in the distribution of power in the Middle East, where influence became loyal to America's local allies, at the expense of former Soviet allies. In turn, the American-led invasion and occupation of Iraq contributed to this shift and the change in the balance of power. The prevailing imbalance in regional geopolitical distribution has encouraged leaders such as Bashar al-Assad in Syria and Kadhafi in Libya to take an effective approach to what they see as a blockade by the increasingly influential U.S.-led bloc. It is common knowledge in the theory of international relations that the imbalance would lead to an automatic reaction, which was reflected in their recourse to a major non-Arab regional authority represented in Iran."

For its part, Tehran sought conflict after 2011 as it did in Iraq after 2003. To strengthen its position as a regional power through the use of agent forces such as the Houthis in Yemen, The Lebanese Hezbollah in Syria, and the Popular Mobilization Forces in Iraq, in order to implement its sectarian agenda, and, as Susan Maloney of the Brookings Institution, Washington, says, "Tehran has succeeded by exploiting Sectarian conflicts in strengthening its dominance, and their ability to initially reorient the regional order in its their favor." This was evident in the 2006-2008 Iraqi civil wars.

Since the Arab Spring, this bipolar geopolitical framework in the Middle East has been an integral part of the nature of the situation on the ground. The civil wars in Libya, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen have created new ground for U.S. and Iranian allies to cooperate for regional hegemony. Harrison saw the geopolitical outcome as the most important of the civil wars in the Middle East. Although, it is not a superpower or competition between external forces, as it is often driven by local factors, it can often continue to be influenced by regional and global competition.

In this environment of competition between two poles or various poles, external forces refuse to reach compromise solutions to end regional civil wars, such as in Syria. Instead, they take care of local actors or engage regional partners. Bruce Jones, of the Brookings Institution, says: "We have moved away from the geopolitical situation, where a number of actors in the region are intervening through their agents, which actually fuels the dynamic of violence."

As a result of this external interference in the region's civil wars, contemporary internal conflicts, the most important of which is the Syrian civil war, can spread instability throughout the region. Harrison describes this fact as a "vertically transmitted infection", meaning that "the phenomenon of civil wars is turning at the country level into conflicts at the regional level, while a stable Middle East allows forces to benefit from competition for regional hegemony." This will encourage The bloc's leaders, the United States on the one hand, and Iran, along with Russia, have been encouraging local allies to join civil wars in order to preserve their interests and seek hegemony since 2015, and to spread the conflict

by developing new dynamics, such as Turkey's incursion into Syria since 2016 in order to prevent the growth of Kurdish self-ruling.

On the whole, although this report is an important geopolitical contribution, it has helped to build a broad understanding of the geopolitical realities in the Middle East today, and has succeeded in establishing new realities of the internal and external dynamics that shape regional developments because of his contribution to the study of civil wars and the regional geopolitical situation in the Middle East. The author has often ignored the main factors that led to the emergence of competition between Washington and its allies on the one hand, and between the states of Damascus, Tehran and Hezbollah on the other, especially since he downplayed the seriousness of this rivalry in the pre-Arab Spring, saying that it is "without victims", thus also reducing the seriousness of For local influences of the challenges represented by the U.S. and its allies before 2011, for example, Hezbollah's involvement in the 2006 Lebanon war.

Other weaknesses may be included in Harrison's lack of understanding of how international competition, in light of the Syrian scenario, has caused civil wars. As Christopher Phillips of the Chatham House Institute of Britain asserts, the international and regional atmosphere surrounding the Syrian uprising was the key to its transformation from peaceful demonstrations to civil war.

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